

Point of Order—Mr. Hnatyshyn

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I have not given any instruction to the committee, I trust it entirely.

[English]

MR. HNATYSHYN—COMPOSITION OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION

Madam Speaker: Is the hon. member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) rising on a point of order?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, it is on a point of order with respect to business of the House and a matter directly under the jurisdiction of the government House leader. There has developed, in the course of the selection process in terms of this particular joint committee, a precedent which the government House leader has direct authority to curtail. It is contrary to every principle of parliamentary tradition which we have in the country. It is the nomination of a member of cabinet as a member of this committee. I refer to Senator Argue being promoted by the other place to be a member of this committee.

We have a number of other senators from Saskatchewan, Senator Balfour, Senator Buckwold, and Senator Steuart, who are all known and can participate in a meaningful way on this particular committee.

In terms of the membership of this committee and in accordance with our parliamentary traditions, will the government House leader undertake not to introduce and allow the introduction of a colleague of his as a member of this committee, so that the average rank and file member of the House of Commons in fact can participate in that committee without direct government intervention?

Madam Speaker: It seems to me I cannot allow the hon. member to raise a point of order on something which is taking place in the other chamber.

Mr. Epp: It is on the joint committee.

Madam Speaker: Probably the minister cannot answer about what is going on in the other chamber.

Some hon. Members: Yes he can.

Madam Speaker: At any rate, I have given him the floor so that he might answer, but I just warn hon. members that questions about what is going on in the Senate should be asked in the Senate.

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I did not give any instruction to the senators about the election of the members of the committee and I do not intend to do so. The comments of the hon. member does not affect me at all because once again I do not intend to intervene in the selection of the members of the committee, especially those appointed by the Senate. I have not been

involved in any manner whatever in the appointment of the members of the committee and I do not intend to be.

[English]

Madam Speaker: Is the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) seeking the floor on a point of order?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, it is on a question of House business. The business of the House is very directly affected by the date of reporting of that committee, in that the report will have to be considered by the House. Was Senator Perrault, the government House leader in the Senate, speaking on behalf of the government when he indicated on Monday night in the Senate—

Miss Bégin: Ask him.

Mr. Beatty: —that the government would entertain seriously an interim report by the committee asking for an extension of the December 9 deadline?

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the question could perhaps be put in the Senate but I do not know how I could comment on Senator Perrault's reply with which I am not acquainted. Anyhow I do not intend to comment on what Senator Perrault said in the other place. If he has a question to put in the Senate, he has colleagues there who could do it.

[English]

Madam Speaker: The right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark).

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

MR. CLARK—STATEMENTS MADE IN SENATE BY GOVERNMENT MINISTERS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, this raises an entirely new question of order and entirely new question of the practices of the House of Commons. We have now, as we had in the last Parliament, a situation where, as a result of electoral return, it was necessary for the Government of Canada to reach beyond this House for ministers and to have senators sit as full ministers, carrying full ministerial responsibility and carrying the limitations of ministers as members of the cabinet of Canada. That is the situation in the House.

As was stated frequently last year, it raises some difficulties and perhaps infringes on our privileges. At least it raises some difficulties for members of the House of Commons who might want to put questions directly to cabinet ministers who do not sit here in the House of Commons.

We all regret the electoral situation which causes cabinet ministers to be drawn from the other place. All of us would prefer to have cabinet ministers directly elected and reporting here in the House of Commons. But what has happened here is